

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

NIC-01 EB-07 /067 W

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R 051600Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6396

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 0886

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, NU

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO

SUMMARY: OPPOSITION LEADER PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO WHO HAS BEEN ONE OF FIGURES MOST AFFECTED BY IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW TOLD EMBOFFS THAT:

(1) HE DOES NOT BELIEVE GON WILL CHARGE HIM WITH INVOLVEMENT IN FSLN TERRORISM; (2) HE IS DISENCHANTED WITH WHAT HE VIEWS AS PRIVATE SECTOR'S TIMIDITY IN OPPOSING SOMOZA; (3) HE DOES NOT BELIEVE COMMUNISTS WILL FIT IN SHOULD UDEL EVER APPROACH TAKING POWER; (4) HE WELCOMES VENEZUELA'S INCREASED INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA BUT LAMENTS LOSS OF PRESIDENT PEREZ' SUPPORT FOR SOMOZA OPPONENTS; (5) HE SEES NO HOPE FOR THE SOMOZA REGIME REFORMING ITSELF EVEN AFTER SHOCK OF LOS ROBLES INCIDENT. IN ADDITION, WHEN DISCUSSING CENSORSHIP, CHAMORRO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN WHAT HE VIEWED AS HEIGHTENED

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U.S. CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN OVER SUCH ISSUES AS PRESS

CENSORSHIP IN OTHER COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY.

1. POLOFFS SPOKE AT LENGTH FEBRUARY 27 WITH PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO, SOMOZA'S MOST WELL-KNOWN AND DEDICATED OPPONENT. THE IMPOSITION OF THE STATE OF SIEGE AFTER THE DECEMBER 27 LOS ROBLES INCIDENT HAS APPEARED TO AFFECT CHAMORRO MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE OWING TO THE STILLING OF HIS CRITICAL VOICE IN HIS NEWSPAPER LA PRENSA, ITS POSSIBLY CHILLING EFFECTS ON THE ORGANIZATION PLAN OF THE UNION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERATION (UDEL), AND THE THREAT OF A MILITARY TRIAL AGAINST CHMORRO HIMSELF. CHAMORRO'S COMMENTS ON THESE POINTS AND OTHERS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

2. EFFECTS OF MARTIAL LAW. CHAMORRO SAW NO IMMINENT THREAT OF THE GON CHARGING HIM BEFORE MILITARY TRIBUNAL OF COLLABORATION WITH SANDINIST FRONT (FSLN), AND INTERPRETED APPARENT OFFICIAL PREPARATIONS TOWARD THAT END (MANAGUA 0335) AS ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE HIM. RATHER THAN HIS PERSONAL SAFETY, HIS PRIMARY CONCERN WAS THAT STATE OF SIEGE HAD BEEN IMPOSED AT CRITICAL TIME FOR UDEL WHEN IT MOST NEEDED PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RALLIES TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM. HE SEEMED EQUALLY BITTER AGAINST THE FSLN FOR PROVOKING THE MEASURE AND LEAVING OVERT OPPOSITIONISTS TO SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES AGAINST SOMOZA. HOWEVER, DESPITE MARTIAL LAW UDEL CONTINUES HOLDING PRIVATE MEETINGS IN DEPARTMENTS AND NOW HAS LOCAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES FUNCTIONING IN ALL BUT THREE OF SIXTEEN DEPARTMENTS. GON HAS SO FAR NOT INTERFERRED WITH THESE ACTIVITIES ALTHOUGH THE GROUP HAS PURPOSELY AVOIDED PROVOKING THE GOVERNMENT--STAYING OUT OF MATAGALPA AND JINOTEGA WHERE TENSION OVER FSLN IS HIGHEST. WHILE STATING THAT CENSORSHIP HAS NOT HURT LA PRENSA'S CIRCULATION, CHAMORRO WAS INCENSED AT PETTINESS OF CENSORS WHO CAPRICIOUSLY REJECT REPORTS ON EVEN MINOR DEFICIENCIES BY GON ENTITIES, E.G. LACK OF WATER IN MANAGUA BARRIO, AND HAVE COMPLETELY DISALLOWED EVEN THE PEDANTIC ECONOMIC COMMENTARIES OF FRANCISCO LAINEZ. CHAMORRO EXPRESSED CURIOSITY ABOUT THE OFFICIAL USG POSITION ON CENSORSHIP AND PARTICULARLY ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE NEW CONGRESS WHICH HE VIEWED AS MORE SENSITIVE TO SUCH THINGS THEN ITS PREDECESSORS.

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3. OTHER ANTI-SOMOZA ACTIVITIES. CHAMORRO WAS GENERALLY DISAPPOINTED IN PRIVATE SECTOR'S TIMIDITY IN REFUSING TO TAKE ON SOMOZA OVER ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ISSUES. HE WAS PARTICULARLY DISGUSTED OVER CHAMBER OF INDUSTRIES' (CADIN) INCONCLUSIVE HANDLING OF LETTER PETITIONING END OF MARTIAL LAW (MANAGUA 0876). HE FELT PRIVATE SECTOR FREQUENTLY FINDS HIM USEFUL TO FIGHT ITS BATTLES, BUT IS IN GENERAL TOO DEPENDENT ON SOMOZA FOR GOVERNMENT LARGESSE TO TAKE

INDEPENDENT STAND. CHAMORRO WAS EQUALLY DEPRECATIVE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION GROUPS OTHER THAN UDEL. UNSURPRISINGLY, HE FINDS HIS OLD ANTAGONIST CONSERVATIVE LEADER FERNANDO AGUERO IRRELEVANT TO THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE, AND ALTHOUGH HE IS SYMPATHETIC TOWARD SOME ELEMENTS OF THE PAGUAGISTA CONSERVATIVE CAMP, BELIEVES THEY ARE TOO COMPROMISED WITH SOMOZA. HE SEEMED GENUINELY PUZZLED AND DISMAYED AT HIS COUSIN DEPUTY EDUARDO CHAMORRO'S REFUSAL TO SIGN WITH ELEVEN OTHER PAGUAGISTA CONGRESSMEN A PROTEST OVER THE MANNER IN WHICH A RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE DECEMBER 27 INCIDENT WAS RAMMED THROUGH THE CONGRESS BY THE LIBERAL MAJORITY. ALTHOUGH ACKNOWLEDGING EDUARDO'S LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL, PEDRO JOAQUIN EXPRESSED DOUBTS THAT HE COULD EVER DEVOTE HIMSELF FULLY TO OPPOSITION POLITICS.

4. COMMUNISTS IN UDEL. FROM HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THEM IN UDEL BELIEVES THAT MANY OF THE PRINCIPAL COMMUNIST LABOR LEADERS HAVE BECOME SURPRISINGLY MODERATE WITH PASSAGE OF TIME, AND SEEMED INTIGUED THAT SOME WERE ACTIVE IN CONSERVATIVE PARTY IN THEIR YOUTH. AT SAME TIME, HE ADMITTED THAT SHOULD UDEL EVER COME TO THE BRINK OF POWER, PARTING OF WAYS BETWEEN MORE MODERATE MEMBERS AND COMMUNIST COMPONENT WAS INEVITABLE.

5. VENEZUELA. WHILE VIEWING THE RISE OF VENEZUELAN INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA AS A WELCOME DEVELOPMENT, CHAMORRO CONCEDED THAT NICARAGUA WAS PAYING A HIGH PRICE IN ITS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS THROUGH INCREASED PETROLEUM PRICES FOR WHATEVER BENEFITS VENEZUELA MIGHT OFFER. CHAMORRO COMMENTED WISTFULLY THAT HIS OLD FRIEND

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

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R 051600Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6397  
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
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AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAGUA 0886

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

AND COMRADE IN EXILE, PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, HAD UPON ASSUMING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CHIEF OF STATE SHED HIS ANTI-SOMOZA STANCE, AND SOMOZA'S OPPONENTS IN NICARAGUA HAVE IN EFFECT LOST AN ALLY. CHAMORRO SAID THE SAME THING HAPPENED WHEN ANOTHER OLD CARIBBEAN LEGION FRIEND, JOSE FIGUERES, BECAME PRESIDENT IN COSTA RICA.

6. VIEWS ON SOMOZA. WHILE HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ELEMENTS OF THE SOMOZA REGIME WERE REPENTANT AFTER THE SANDINISTA INCIDENT AND DETERMINED TO ATTACK THE ILLS OF THE COUNTRY, CHAMORRO COMPARED THIS TO A MAN WITH A HANGOVER SWEARING NEVER TO TAKE ANOTHER DRINK. HE CHARACTERIZED THE SOMOZA REGIME AS BEING BUILT ON CORRUPTION AND ORGANICALLY INCAPABLE OF REFORMING ITSELF. CHAMORRO RECOGNIZED THAT SOMOZA'S ATTEMPT TO BLAME HIM FOR ALL OPPOSITION TO THE REGIME HAD ELEVATED HIS (CHAMORRO'S) STATUS TO THAT OF THE PREMIERE OPPOSITION FIGURE. HE COULD NOT EXPLAIN WHAT HE TERMED SOMOZA'S OBSESSION WITH HIM, BUT SUGGESTED IT WAS ONLY HELPFUL IN SMALL DOSES.  
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7. COMMENT: DURING THE CONVERSATION CHAMORRO SEEMED RELAXED AND WAS EVEN DISPASSIONATE IN HIS REMARKS ABOUT SOMOZA. HE APPEARED SLIGHTLY FLUSTERED ONLY WHEN EXPLAINING ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNISTS. HOWEVER, HIS FRUSTRATION WITH THE CENSORSHIP SITUATION WAS MANIFEST AND HIS REFERENCE TO U.S. LEGISLATORS SUGGESTS HE MAY BE SEARCHING FOR AN EXTERNAL FORCE TO EASE HIS SITUATION.  
SHELTON

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, NU, UDEL, (CHAMORRO, PEDRO JOAQUIN)  
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